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[See category 342 for information about techniques of joining and structural devices used in dwellings.]

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

lashed together to form arches are manufactured by the Ayr women, or are imported from the south by the *Kel Geres* Tuareg when they visit Ayr at the end of the rains. The arches manufactured by the Ayr women are made from the very long horizontal roots (*tékéwt*) of the *afagag* acacia (*Acacia Raddiana*). Pieces of root of suitable size are placed over an open fire for a while, and are thereupon bent into the desired curve which is secured by cords. When the root pieces thus treated become dry they will retain their curved form; the cords are then untied and the root pieces fashioned with a knife. However, wooden arches imported by the *Kel Geres* are used by many Ayr Tuareg who claim that these arches are superior to their own. They are said to be manufactured from boughs (or roots?) of a tree known as *tarmumiya*, which does not grow in Ayr but in the *Kel Geres* country.

(2) Parallel to the three arches there are two pairs of cross-bars supported by vertical sticks, a pair being placed at both sides of the arches to form the narrow sides of the dwelling. These cross-bars are termed *izgar* (sing. *éseger*). They are sometimes made by blacksmiths, and are then provided with various ornaments including a little discus-like thickening carved at the middle of the bar. In fairly large tents each cross-bar is supported by four vertical sticks, the two middle ones of which are generally forked, while the two outer sticks are somewhat higher and attached to the cross-bar with cords. All these vertical sticks, including the outer ones which have no prongs, are termed *tigettewin* (sing. *tégettéwt*). In smaller tents there are only two or three sticks supporting the cross-bar. The vertical sticks used to support the cross-bars are normally very simple. Sticks of the very light *turza* tree (*Calotropis procera*) are preferred.

(3) Over this skeleton of arches and cross-bars supported by vertical sticks are placed a number of slender curved rods which are termed *ilellewan* (sing. *alellewa*). These rods are made from acacia roots, as described above, or are rods of the *tarmumiya* tree imported from the south. These rods form semi-arches in the longitudinal direction of the tent. Each of these semi-arches consists of two identical rods fastened to the horizontal cross-bars at their thick end, while at their thin ends they are lashed together and fastened to the true arches. There is always a considerable number of these slender semi-arches, normally about ten.

The Ayr Tuareg use the following types of mats to cover the upper part of the dome-shaped structure:— *iwerweren* (sing. *éwerwer*), the mats made from plant stems tied to each other with leather thread (cf. p. 350); *isfal* (sing. *ésefel*), mats of an oval shape plaited from dum palm leaves; *asalemmas*, a long narrow piece of mat made from dum palm leaves. In addition there is the term *érell* which designates the long narrow mat plaited from dum palm leaves surrounding the lower part of the tent structure. In very hot weather this mat is omitted so that currents of air may pass through the dwelling, while the tent is closed when it is cold, or during storms. A tent as that described has a dome-shaped or barrel-vaulted superstructure, the ground-plan being almost rectangular. A tent of normal size will measure about 3.00×4.50 m with a height of 1.80 to 1.90 m.

The mat tent is erected by one or two Tuareg women in the following way:—

(1) The ground is cleared; (2) The large wooden bed (*tédabut*), which is used everywhere in the south, is placed upon the ground to facilitate measuring; (3) Two large pronged posts, which serve to carry woman's riding cushions and various large skin bags, are placed behind the bed and fixed into holes dug by means of some iron implement, e.g., the cooking tripod, the broad end of a lance,

[text continues on p. 353]

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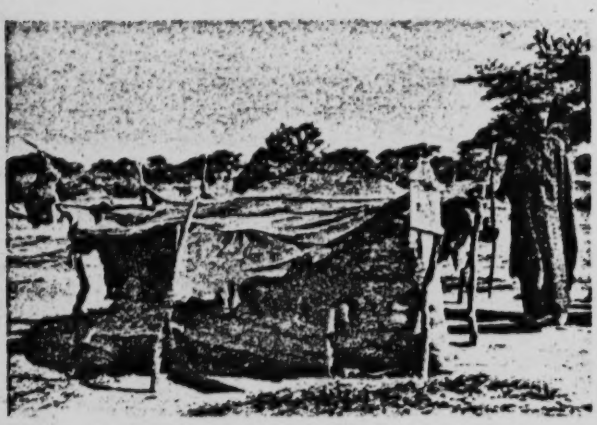

Fig. 272. Skin tent of the B.2.a.3. type belonging to *Kel Dennek* blacksmiths camping in Ayr near Agadez.

*342 of its ground area. The blacksmiths said that in their homeland at Twa only very small tents had central arches, while large tents had central T-shaped posts, but this latter structure could not be used in small tents because of the very large wooden bed. Tents of this type have not been described by Nicolas from the *Kel Dennek*, and various people who know this area have told me that they have never seen there tents of arch construction.

B.2.a.4. The tent type to be described is of arch construction. It was formerly very common in Ahaggar, but is extremely rare nowadays. The sheet of skin rests upon two arches placed parallel to each other at right angles to the longitudinal direction, and upon two horizontal cross-bars each lying on a pair of forked sticks. These wooden elements are normally made of the *tabarekkat* tree (*Tamarix aphylla*), the arches being manufactured from its roots which are heated over the fire and attached with cords in their bent position, as has already been described from the Ayr Tuareg, who make arches of acacia roots for mat tents in this way (cf. p. 351). But the arches used in Ahaggar are made from one piece of root each, and not from two pieces lashed together as in Ayr. The arches thus made are known as *iǧeǧan* (sing. *aǧeǧu*), but the term *tiheknin* (sing. *téhakent*) is generally used by vassals of the tribes *Aǧuh-en-tehlé* and *Dag Rali*. Though the arches are made from a single piece of root they may be fairly large, and two arches which are now in the Musée de l'homme in Paris have, according to Lhote, a diameter of 1.70 metres (cf. Lhote 1947a, p. 43; Musée de l'homme, Coll. H. Lhote 1941). The cross-bars horizontally placed at both sides of the arches are called *iregéraǧaten* (sing. *aregaraǧa*), and the forked sticks which support them *tiǧeǯǯewin* (*tiǧeǯǯewt*). Foucauld states that the two horizontal cross-bars resting upon forked poles do not properly belong to the tent structure, so that the sheet is supported only by the two arches which are placed parallel to each other at a distance of about 1.50 metres (Foucauld 1951–52, I, p. 247 f.). These two arches are also mentioned by Benhazera without any reference to horizontal cross-bars (Benhazera 1908, p. 26). However, my

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